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# Spencers Theatre of Illusion

Center for Performing Arts

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# THE CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS

Governors State University

Presents

## THE SPENCERS

Theatre of Illusion



April 2, 2000

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## CINDY AND KEVIN SPENCER

CINDY SPENCER says that performing has always been in her blood, but not necessarily magic. While in high school, she participated in productions, took voice lessons and began to learn how to handle herself in front of people. Naturally a quiet, shy person, she believes her desires outweighed her fears and she became accustomed to being in the spotlight.

In college she received a vocal scholarship and was again thrust "onto the stage." She joined a vocal performance group which performed in many interesting places and for many amazing people.

After college she moved to Dallas, Texas where she worked as a diamond consultant. That is where she met Kevin Spencer and began helping him perform his magic act. Eventually they became great friends and they married in 1983.

KEVIN SPENCER was intrigued by magic at a very early age. He remembers as a little boy sitting in front of the television and being fascinated by what he saw there. His parents bought him a magic kit at age eight and he worked hard on each of the tricks. He says he "performed" these small magic effects throughout elementary and early junior high school.

In the seventh grade, Kevin's focus changed to music and he began piano lessons. He always had a desire to perform and music became very important to him. He was fortunate to have great teachers and excelled rapidly to the point of considering music as a career. However, then came Doug Henning who revived Kevin's fascination with magic.

Upon graduation, Kevin left home for college, taking his magic and music with him. He worked in one of the magic shops part-time and was exposed to new effects and gave him excellent experience in demonstrating them for others.

After college Kevin moved to Dallas, Texas where he met Cindy and they began working together on a part-time basis as he laid the groundwork for a career in magic.

## THE SPENCERS

They don't perform on TV specials or chat with David Letterman. And, since they're married to each other, they don't date supermodels.

However, to the professionals who book talent at theatres, auditoriums and colleges around the country, the Spencers are more popular than David Copperfield, the illusionist duo's celebrity peer in prestidigitation.

The Spencers have been awarded Performing Arts Entertainer of the Year three years in succession – 1995, 1996 and 1997. The annual award is voted on by more than 4,000 entertainment professionals from around the country who book and present entertainers. Their selection is based on box office receipts and audiences appeal.

The duo presents elaborate illusions that include dazzling special effects and puzzling feats of “howdeydodat?” What the act does not include are “rabbits or balloon animals,” says Kevin Spencer. “We have a little dog that travels with us on the road, but he's not in the act.”

Like Copperfield, The Spencers present a big, high-tech stage show that combines drama, comedy and suspense. “We're a very rare breed these days,” says Kevin. “Fulltime professional, working magicians are very few. Fulltime working illusionists who are touring the country are even fewer. It's hard to say ( how many) – maybe 10, 15 national acts.”

Entertainers come and go, but few leave behind a lasting impression on their audiences or their art. The Spencers are one of those rare exceptions. Walk away from their show and you'll be surprised at what you hear. These “masters of mystery” never cease to amaze. But there's more. Kevin and Cindy Spencer have mastered an elusive quality that elevates an ordinary performance into the realm of extraordinary art, changing the way people view what magic is and what it will continue to be. With charisma, their personalities travel beyond the stage lights to not only their viewers' inquisitive minds, but their hearts as well. Audiences cease to see the Spencers simply as “wonder workers,” but as people about whom they care.

*"Spectators come away feeling they've just seen something spectacular that they can't see anywhere else, and that they've shared that time with two very special people,"* wrote one critic having witnessed the Spencer's performance. *"They're the most genuine performers I've seen. They're simply the best in every aspect."*

## A MAGICAL SUCCESS STORY

Widespread honors and national recognition are no strangers to The Spencers who have left a trail of accolades in their wake. In a type of "People's Choice Awards" garnered by the readers of *Campus Activities* (one of the nation's leading magazines for entertainment professionals), the Spencers were also named Entertainers of the Year and Best Performing Arts Event. In the past, these same professionals have awarded them these honors: Best Major Performance, Best Touring Event, Best Variety Artists and Best Contemporary Artists. These readers represent entertainment professionals from television, casting companies, arts presenters and university entertainment buyers. Kevin and Cindy have the unique distinction of having received more *Reader's Choice Awards* than any other touring artist.

Equally impressive as their collection of honors is the Spencer's ability to propel the ancient art of magic into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with abundant ease and panache. Working with some of the leading inventors, creators and builders in the magic industry, the Spencers incorporate original, never-before-seen illusions into their production providing their audiences with a unique and unforgettable experience.

Audiences cross over a threshold of disbelief only moments after they take the stage. Using magic much like a storyteller uses words, The Spencers fuse their family-oriented show with a gamut of emotions from slackjawed bewilderment, to bittersweet romance, to sidesplitting comedy, to "on-the-edge-of-your-seat" high drama.

Their production is truly astounding. But if people find their show amazing, they would truly be amazed by their daunting schedule that keeps them on the road 38 weeks a year touring the United States and abroad. They have performed in over 200 cities and completed successful tours in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Mexico performing in such world-renown theaters as the Festival Theatre (Adelaide) and the Theatre du Capitol (Quebec).

## MAGIC THAT HEALS

The Spencers have committed their life to magic whether it be on the stage or off. When they're not working 12-hour days to get a show up and running, they can be found spreading the word about the therapeutic benefits of learning magic for persons with physical and psychosocial disabilities. Their program, Healing of Magic, uses simple magic tricks as a form of rehabilitative therapy. It has an international reputation and is currently being used by some of the most prestigious rehabilitation centers in the United States and 13 foreign countries.

Although the Spencers don't lay claim to originating the idea, they have greatly expanded the concept in part by writing the most comprehensive guide to beginning and maintaining a "magic therapy" program available to health-care professionals and educators. Their workshops for hospital and rehabilitation occupational therapists are widely recognized as the best in their field. They have been featured in the *American Medical News Journal*, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. For their endeavors they were nominated for the Jefferson Award sponsored by the Kennedy Foundation and they are the recipients of the *Harry Chapin Award for Contributions to Humanity*.

*"Magic wands don't always belong with black hats and rabbits. Sometimes they belong in hospitals where frail hands learn tricks and the magic - the real magic - is in the healing,"* says Cindy Spencer.

## A MAGICAL FUTURE

Kevin and Cindy Spencer have earned the reputation as one of the most sought after illusion teams in the country and one of the most highly regarded acts in entertainment. They have brought the art of illusion to new heights of artistry and imagination.

Combining theatrical elements and technology with magic, special effects, music, humor, audience interaction and cutting-edge illusions, The Spencers deliver a clean, positive performance with a style that is uniquely their own . . . and guaranteed to entertain!